



January 29, 2010

John Stufflebean, Director  
City of San Jose Environmental Services Department

Matt Krupp and Kirsten Struve, Project Planners  
Water Pollution Control Plant Master Plan  
Santa Clara - San Jose Water Pollution Control Plant

**Re: Water Pollution Control Plant Master Plan Recommended Alternative**

Dear Director Stufflebean, Mr. Krupp and Ms. Struve,

On behalf of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Committee for Green Foothills, Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance, Save The Bay, Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition, Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, San Francisco Baykeeper, and the thousands of individuals we represent, we reiterate our position that the public deserves to be presented with an alternative that would allocate all of the buffer lands of the Water Pollution Control Plant to uses that preserve and enhance the value of the land's natural resources.

During the public process of Spring 2010, our nine environmental organizations sent a letter to the WPCP planning team. In that letter, we asked the team to present the public with an "Environment, Ecology and Water Alternative" that would allow developed land uses solely for development that is directly required to address the water treatment purpose of the plant. We asked for an alternative in which all other land uses should be based on the existing environment, view-sheds, ecology, the historic Bay ecology and environment, and recreational uses consistent with the ecology and the nature of the land and its restoration. This requested alternative has yet to be presented to the public.

We recognize that in the currently Recommended Alternative for the Master Plan, planners incorporated expansive salt marshes and riparian habitats, and included a 190-acre dedicated

burrowing owl habitat. However, the Recommended Alternative retains hundreds of acres of commercial, industrial and educational development, new roads and bridges, and energy fields – all of which would consume precious public open space. We reiterate our request that the public be allowed to examine an alternative that is focused on environmental land uses, with no economic development.

Planners and decision makers explain that the recommended Master Plan balances economic, social and environmental objectives. **We maintain that to be sustainable and justifiable, growth must be considered in a regional context and balanced on a regional scale, not on a project footprint scale. We continue to argue that public land should be used for the protection and enhancement of public environmental resources, and not sacrificed for private benefit.**

We ask that:

1. The recommendation of the Master Plan must require that the resulting EIR present to the public the environmental alternative that we asked for in June 2010 and again in this letter. This **alternative would allow developed land uses exclusively for the needs of the Water Pollution Control Plant, and focus all other uses on the ecology, viewsheds and historical connotations of the South Bay environment.** Connectivity, trails and other recreation-oriented development should be consistent with the ecology and nature of existing and restored ecosystems.
2. The grasslands along Highway 237 form an important wildlife corridor extending from Coyote Creek's riparian areas across the property. The grasslands also comprise a rare refuge for plants and wildlife in the face of sea level rise, and provide one of the last viable burrowing owl habitats in the south bay. We urge the City of San Jose and its planning team to allocate the entire grassland area to environmental enhancement.
3. At this time of recession, with pervasive vacancy of industrial and retail space throughout the South Bay, growth must be considered in a regional context and balanced on a regional scale and not on a project footprint scale, and redevelopment of blighted areas should precede the development of open space. We argue that there is no urgency to the allocation of undeveloped public land to economic uses, but there is a great and urgent need to protect public open space and declining, threatened habitats and species.

Respectfully,

Shani Kleinhaus  
Environmental Advocate  
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society



Brian A. Schmidt  
Legislative Advocate  
Committee for Green Foothills



COMMITTEE FOR  
GREEN FOOTHILLS

Charles G. Schafer  
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Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club



Eileen P. McLaughlin  
Advocate, San Jose Shoreline  
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge



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